

House Republican Press Release

March 17, 2005
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Hey Connecticut- Choke on this!



*An Op-Ed by State Representative Kevin Witkos 17th
Assembly District*

The legislature's Education Committee this week conducted a public hearing on numerous proposals intended to make our schools better schools, to make our kids' learning experiences more sound and make our kids thinner. Consider one such proposal entitled, "An Act Concerning School Nutrition" (SB #1309), a lesson in unintended consequences.

This received considerable support from legislators, including the powerful President Pro Tempore of the Senate Donald Williams. The bill purports to address the problem of obesity. This apparently will be accomplished by the State Department of Education compiling a list of approved snacks that can be consumed by students on school grounds.

Commissioner Elizabeth Sternberg will squeeze the snack issue into her busy schedule once all the No Child Left Behind testing is finalized and other major 'education' issues are addressed. I guess parents don't know what's best for their kids. We haven't taught Latin much in schools for many years but this strikes me as a perfect example of *in loco parentis* gone simply, "loco."

Senator Williams was specifically asked if this bill would prohibit the sale of Girl Scout cookies and other fundraising efforts by our children that provide for similar programs. His answer was an emphatic "YES."

Well, you may say, maybe the fundraising should be done at home or in the neighborhood. To all the volunteer parents that are members of athletic booster clubs, say goodbye to the concession stands at basketball and football games - they're not on the list. The meddlesome interference doesn't stop there. The bill would prohibit such activities as benefit dinners and no longer would students be allowed to serve breakfast as a thank you to the vets on Veterans Day - many of those food items are not on the list.

Did I fail to mention that you, the taxpayer, must continue to fund the maintenance, upkeep, additions and renovations to your school through your local budgets. The legislature here in Hartford believes it has the right to dictate what you can do with it. This is absolutely communistic legislation that cannot and should not be even debated

here in Connecticut. My fear is that legislative leaders in a Democrat-controlled General Assembly will force the bill through in support of the President Pro Tempore. It's time to rally the troops, grab the phone, call your representative and senator and let your voice be heard.

Maybe lawmakers should insist we go back to teaching Latin rather than hovering over our students in the cafeteria, cutting up their legislatively-mandated green beans.